



August 12, 2003

Pawtucket man admits to cocaine trafficking

HIDTA Task Force agents tracked nine kilograms of cocaine to Shawn Montegio's home in February

Shawn Montegio, 30, of Pawtucket, has pleaded guilty in federal court to cocaine trafficking and firearms offenses, admitting that he received nearly nine kilograms of cocaine at his home in February and that he had a handgun on him when he was arrested. Agents of **Rhode Island Task Force of the New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)** had been monitoring Montegio's activities and arrested him on February 9, along with two men who had driven the cocaine to Montegio's home about an hour before the arrest.

United States Attorney Margaret E. Curran announced the guilty plea, which Montegio entered yesterday before U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith in U.S. District Court, Providence. Montegio is detained at the Wyatt Federal Detention Center, Central Falls, pending sentencing, which is scheduled for October 31.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth P. Madden said at the plea hearing that HIDTA Task Force agents, acting with court approval, intercepted telephone conversations between Montegio and another male indicating that upwards of ten kilograms of cocaine would be delivered to Montegio's home at 45 Claremont Street on February 9.

Shortly after 7:00 PM on February 9, agents observed a car with Virginia license plates arrive at 45 Claremont Street. Two men left the vehicle and entered Montegio's first floor

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apartment, one of them carrying a duffel bag. At about 8:30 PM, agents entered the apartment and found Montegio and the other two men, who are from Queens, New York. After attempting to flee, all three were arrested. Montegio had a .40 caliber, semi-automatic pistol in his possession.

Pursuant to a warrant obtained after agents arrested the three men, agents searched the apartment and found nine kilograms of cocaine on a kitchen counter, \$114,100 in cash, a duffel bag containing \$900 in cash, and various items used to repackaging the cocaine. Laboratory tests later confirmed that the total weight of the cocaine was 8,954.06 grams.

Later that same day, agents arrested three other defendants and seized \$198,000 in cash found in boxes at the home of a relative of Montegio.

An indictment was returned on February 12, charging Montegio and the two men arrested at this house with conspiracy and cocaine trafficking offenses. Montegio was also charged with firearms offenses. Montegio subsequently filed a motion to suppress the evidence, arguing that the search had been obtained improperly. After a hearing, Judge Smith denied that motion.

Montegio pleaded guilty to four charges: conspiracy to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine, possessing with intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine, possessing a firearm after a previous felony conviction, and possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense.

The statutory maximum penalties for the offenses are: conspiracy and possessing with intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine – life imprisonment and a \$4,000,000 fine, with a minimum of ten-years imprisonment; possessing a firearm after a felony conviction – ten years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine; possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking offense – life imprisonment with a minimum of five years imprisonment, consecutive to the sentences imposed for the drug-trafficking offenses, and a \$250,000 fine.

Montegio's sentence will be determined on the basis of federal sentencing guidelines, which take into account such factors as the specific nature and impact of an offense and a defendant's criminal background. Montegio has two previous felony convictions.

A codefendant in the indictment, **Francisco Jose Bermudez**, 31, of Queens, New York, has pleaded guilty to drug-trafficking and conspiracy charges and is awaiting sentencing. Charges are pending against **Gonzola Orosco Velasquez**, 23, also of Queens, New York. Bermudez carried the duffel bag full of cocaine into Montegio's house. Velasquez is accused of being a coconspirator.

Two other defendants were charged separately as a result of the investigation of Montegio. **Emanuel Fernandes**, 31 of 452 Weeden Street, Central Falls, has pleaded guilty to possessing with intent to distribute more than 50 grams of crack cocaine. He is awaiting sentencing. **Carlos Villegas**, 24, of 62 Hendricks Avenue, Central Falls, was sentenced in June to 46 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to possessing with intent to distribute cocaine. Federal charges against another defendant arrested the same night, **Jessica Quinn**, 22, of 41/43 Brown Street, Pawtucket, were subsequently dismissed.

The **HIDTA Task Force**, which investigated the case, is led by the **Federal Bureau of Investigation** and the **Rhode Island State Police**. Detectives from the **Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick, and Woonsocket Police Departments** participated in the Task Force investigation. The **Rhode Island National Guard** provides administrative support to the HIDTA Task Force.

The cases against Montegio and his codefendants are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Madden and Mary E. Rogers.